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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3750  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4926  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5181  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0340  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3175  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4561  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0429  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0314  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1272  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2055  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 002959

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PINR](#) [NP](#)  
SUBJECT: TIBETAN REFUGEE UPDATE, NOVEMBER 3

REF: A. KATHMANDU 2677  
[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 1403  
[1](#)C. KATHMANDU 1702

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) According to Douglas DiSalvo, a UNHCR officer in Kathmandu, 41 out of the group of 43 Tibetan refugees who arrived in Nepal safely after the shooting incident at the Chinese border on October 1 (ref A) departed Nepal for India on October 20 and arrived on October 21; the other two should transit to India soon. DiSalvo told Emboff November 1 that the number of Tibetans at the Tibetan Reception Center (TRC) was down from the same time last year. However, this did not appear to indicate a change of policy in China. DiSalvo also reported that the new U.S.-funded building at the TRC was almost finished, and that Kelsang Tsung, a Tibetan refugee who had worked in Nepal for many years, had been appointed as the new director of the TRC.

Refugees Arrive Safely In India  
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[1](#)2. (C) According to Douglas DiSalvo, Associate Protection Officer at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-Nepal (UNHCR), 41 out of the 43 Tibetan refugees who survived the shooting incident at the Chinese border on October 1 arrived safely in India on October 21. The group was assisted by UNHCR using their regular process of transit assistance through the Tibetan Reception Center (TRC) in Kathmandu.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) DiSalvo said that the other two arrivals were the guides for the ill-fated trip; they had originally attempted to return to China. The two later approached UNHCR in Kathmandu and requested assistance after speaking with their families in China, who they claimed had been detained and questioned. UNHCR determined that the two had a credible fear of persecution in China and decided to assist them. DiSalvo told Emboff that UNHCR had received an official protest from the Chinese permrep in Geneva against their "aiding known human smugglers." UNHCR was working as quickly

as possible to get the remaining two refugees to India.

¶4. (C) Another group of 18 refugees who arrived in early October stated that they had not had any problems at the Chinese border and were unaware of the shooting, DiSalvo noted.

#### Numbers Down At TRC

¶5. (C) According to DiSalvo, the number of refugees at the TRC on November 1 was 217. The number of arrivals in October 2006 was 280 compared to more than 500 in October 2005. DiSalvo believed this was because the Dalai Lama was holding a special religious ceremony in 2005, drawing more people from China than this year. DiSalvo stated that he had not heard anything during his interviews with the new arrivals that would indicate a new Chinese policy to crack down on Tibetan attempts to cross the border.

#### New Building Almost Complete

¶6. (C) DiSalvo stated that the new U.S.-funded building at the TRC was nearly complete, and was ready to house new arrivals. DiSalvo told Emboff that arrival numbers were low enough that the TRC had not needed the building yet -- but he expected the need would arise over the next few months.

#### Bio Note of New Director of the TRC

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¶7. (C) Kelsang Tsung (alternative spelling Kelsang Chung) was appointed as the new director of the TRC. Tsung is a registered Tibetan refugee in Nepal. He worked as a camp secretary in camps in Solukhumbu and Tapeljung districts in

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eastern Nepal before working as a secretary in the cabinet of the Tibetan "Government in Exile" in Dharamsala from 2003-2006. He is fluent in Tibetan and Nepali. His English is not very good.

#### Comment

¶8. (C) It appears from Kathmandu that the October 1 shooting of refugees at the Chinese border was not an indication of a changed policy to clamp down on Tibetans fleeing China. We assume that the group of 18 refugees who arrived later in October would have been aware of any such crackdown; instead, they stated that they had not had any problems at the Chinese border and were unaware of the shooting. We are pleased that the new building at the TRC is coming along well and will follow-up on an opening ceremony.

MORIARTY